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MAN'S TRUE DESTINY.

A

Baccalaureate Address,

TO THE

FIRST GRADUATING CLASS

OF

FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE,

LANCASTER, PA., AUGUST 31st, 1853.

BY

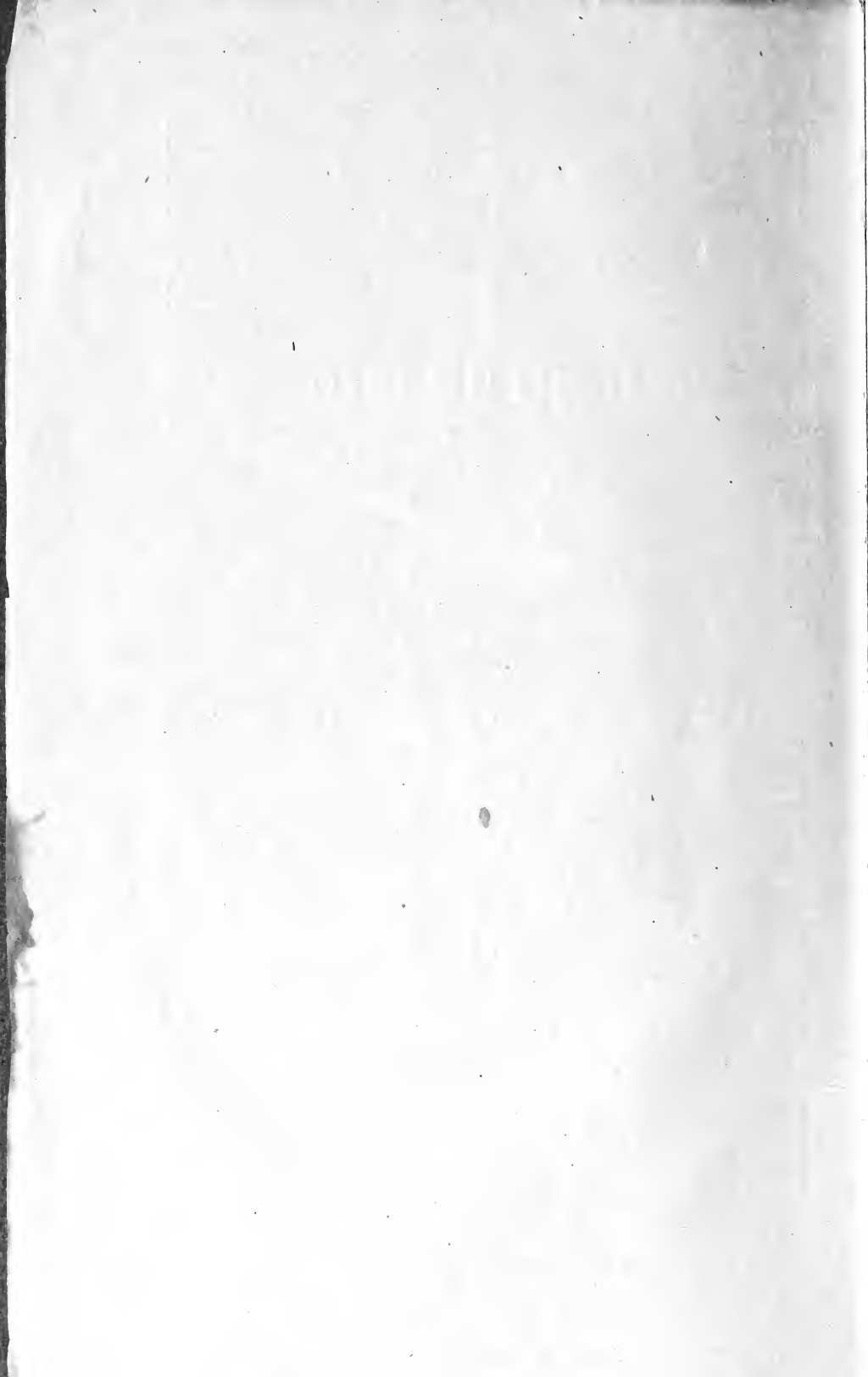
REV. JOHN W. NEVIN, D. D.,

LATE PRESIDENT OF MARSHALL COLLEGE.

[PUBLISHED BY THE GRADUATING CLASS.]

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AUG 2, 1928

A D D R E S S .

YOUNG GENTLEMEN :

By invitation of the Board of Trustees of Franklin and Marshall College, and at your own special and earnest request as a Class, I stand before you on this occasion to pronounce a few parting words in the name of the Board, in the name of the Faculty, and in my own name, in the way of *Baccalaureate Address*. The position is to myself one of more than usual interest and solemnity. The duty which it calls me to discharge, belongs of right to the relation I have borne to you for years as the President of Marshall College. It is not as a stranger, nor as the temporary representative simply of the government of this new institution for the service in hand, that I now speak to you, as a class, for the last time. I appear before you rather in the character of a father, whose responsible privilege it has been to preside over the course of your college education from its commencement to its close, and whose concern for your future welfare is conditioned thus by innumerable cares, and sympathies, and reciprocal affections, the proper growth of such endearing connection, which reach away back into days and years that are past. This relation itself, however, so far as the idea of outward office is concerned, has also passed away. All that remains of it is its moral life and power, which ought to be perpetual. In the present transaction, accordingly, the official in every view may be regarded as overwhelmed and lost in the personal ; while all the circumstances of the occasion conspire to crowd the personal, at the same time, with memories and associations of the most solemnly affecting kind. Any College Commencement is solemn, mirroring as it does, for every thoughtful mind, the great law of change, by which, in the drama of full life, one generation is continually passing away to make room for another.

But on this occasion, we have something more than such an anniversary in its ordinary form. I see before me the first Graduating Class of one institution, which is, in a certain sense, at the same time, the last of a whole series of such Classes belonging to the history of another. These seem to rise in long review before my mind, and to join their presence with yours in the tender solemnities of this parting hour. You will not take it amiss then, if I consider myself speaking to them along with you, in the present address. It is in virtue of a past relation only, at all events, a relation which has now come to an end, that I am here to speak at all. Let this relation then be owned to-day in its broadest extent. Let me feel that the farewell words I now utter, are dedicated as a tribute of affection to all the Alumni, to all who have ever been students of Marshall College.

The true destination of man, the proper end of his being and life, lies beyond the present world in an order of things which is supernatural; and it is absolutely necessary that he should know this, and have supreme practical regard to the fact, in order that he may not live in vain.

This is the theme on which I propose to speak; the one great thought I wish to bring before you, and to leave with you, in the full earnestness of its own proper consequences and relations. May the Spirit of all truth and grace so hallow the naturally sacred associations of this present occasion, that they may serve to fix deeply and lastingly in your minds the living force of the thought itself, so that it shall be found hereafter the pole-star of your existence, lighting it till life shall end onwards and upwards always to the glorious immortality of the saints in heaven.

The necessity of owning a supernatural destiny in the case of man, lies to a certain extent in his natural constitution itself, in the relation he is seen and felt to bear to the world around him in his present mortal state. This relation in one view is of the most close and intimate kind. The organization of the world, as a system of nature, comes to its completion in his person. This is signified to us very plainly in the Mosaic account of the creation; where the whole magnificent process, rising gradually from one stage of order and life to another, is represented as reaching its climax finally on the sixth day, when God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all

the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Man thus is strictly the perfection of nature, the crown of its glory, the very centre of its life. In him the world comes to its last, deepest, fullest significance and sense. So to some extent even in his mere bodily organization. But far more still in his soul, in his intelligence, in the self-acting power of his will—that higher life of reason, of which only the most dim and remote foreshadowings are to be met with in the lower spheres of creation, but whose appearance here at once proclaims itself to be the central light, that reflects back on every other part of the system its true meaning and form. In such relation simply to the present world, our human intelligence and will, notwithstanding the spirituality which belongs to them in their own character, are to be regarded as appertaining still to the constitution of nature. They are the sublimation of this indeed to its highest potency, its most ethereal quality and sense, and present it thus under a form where to be true to itself it *ought* to pass away in the presence of a higher and more enduring economy; but the sublimation itself, the taking up of the world of nature into the world of mind, is now in and of itself the subjection of it in this way, to the claims and purposes of every such economy above nature. The process may stop with the mere *intellectualization*, so to speak, of the present order of things, the world as it now stands; and then it matters not how far the activity of thought may seem to go, exploring the depths or scaling the heights of God's creation; it matters not with what flights of science or art it may appear even to pass over the boundaries of time and space, and to hold communion in its own way with what it is pleased to denominate the absolute and the eternal, all will remain in the end a revelation of the life of nature merely, and nothing more. The mind of Humboldt, regarded as a mirror simply of the outward world he describes, is of one order with *Cosmos*, whose image it serves so magnificently to reflect. Mirror, image, and object, belong alike to the sphere of nature, and have to do only with its organization as such. So deep and far-reaching is the relation, by which man belongs to the present world, stands in it, moves in it, finds in it his natural and congenial home. He is the consummation of nature. It unfolds the entire volume of its wealth; it comes to its full efflorescence, only in his person.

But with all this, or rather we may say for this very reason, the life which belongs to him in the order of nature, is for him

always something incomplete, a form of existence which manifestly does not find its full and proper end in itself, but needs and seeks this continually in some higher and different constitution of things. In this respect, man differs from the mere animal and the plant. Though the fulness of nature be in him, far more than it is in them, he cannot, like them, rest in it as the whole comprehension of his being. They do so, just because they are less than nature in its full sense. Their existence is rounded in by it on all sides, and made complete after its own kind, in the bosom of the general life by whose stream they are borne. But man is himself, as we have just seen, the end of nature, the point where its whole process reaches its ultimate destination. How then should he find in it his own destination or end? The universal constitution of the present world, viewed in its relation to man, carries in it thus a plain intimation that he is formed for a higher sphere of existence, that the life of nature is designed to be in him the beginning only and preparation of a life above nature, and that he can fulfill his destiny only by entering into felt communication with the powers of this *super-natural* life, and by proposing it to himself always as his last object and aim. The world, as a system of nature, completes itself in man, becomes in him a moral world, a world of intelligence and active will, in order simply that it may, through him, become linked, under such form, with another economy far more glorious than itself. Without such object and end, it must be regarded as an insupportable vanity. In itself, it is made up of perpetual revolution and change. The fashion of it is forever passing away. Its best realities are always like a dream or a shadow. It is everywhere an effort after that which is not, a type that labors to express its own sense, an unfulfilled prophecy which struggles towards its accomplishment in something beyond itself. To suppose such an order of things brought to its full conclusion in man's consciousness, made clear to itself here, as it were, in the full perfection of its vanity, without any farther promise or prospect, would be to turn this human consciousness, the high prerogative of reason, into the greatest vanity and most deplorable misery of all. That cannot be the meaning or end of God's natural creation. It looks upward towards man from all sides, not that it may stop there as an eternal irony upon itself, but that by him and through him it may be enabled, as it were, to transcend itself, and to make room thus for a new, higher creation, in which all its transitory show shall be brought

finally to an end. Nature reaches its chief purpose and ultimate destination in man, and, in doing so, refuses to be acknowledged as in any way *his* end, but shuts him up rather to the necessity of seeking this in some other order of existence altogether.

And is it necessary to add, that what is in this way continually proclaimed by the general constitution of the world, finds its full echo in the moral nature of man himself? Whatever relation his intelligence and will may bear to the present world as such, they carry in their very constitution at the same time, no less distinctly, a necessary reference also to something beyond this world, to a higher economy, which is felt to extend over it in the form of truth and law, and in which alone is to be sought and found its highest and last end. The human mind, while it forms the natural summit and necessary crown of the whole inferior creation, includes in itself also what surpasses entirely the measure of this creation, capacities, affinities, tendencies, inborn necessities and wants which it has no power to satisfy, and that call continually for that which it does not contain. It is only in virtue of such higher nature indeed, that man is set rightfully over the world, and appointed to rule it for the glory of God; the intelligence that qualifies him for this being in truth a superior order of existence, which places him above the world as well as in it, by reason of what it is in such more than simply natural view. It is only as made in the image of God, that mind in this case is commissioned to exercise dominion over nature and matter; which at once implies, that to be faithful to itself, and true to its high trust, it must hold itself steadily in union with God, and seek in Him always its last destination and end. Thus it is, accordingly, that the soul of man finds it forever impossible to be either wholly or finally satisfied with the present world, and so long as it seeks to be so is tormented continually with a sense of falsehood and vanity. Whatever it may be for inferior orders of life, the present world is not, in any true sense, an end for man, and the attempt to make it so must always be felt as the power of a perpetually living lie, which carries along with it its own damning punishment wherever and however it may prevail. There is no material difference here between one form and another of such a worldly life. It may be rude or refined, grossly sensual or eminently spiritual; all comes to the same thing at last, an overwhelming confirmation of that old experience: "Vanity of vanities—all is vanity and

vexation of spirit!" The desires of the mind, as Paul terms them, have no advantage in this respect over the desires of the flesh. Nay, the greatest vanity of all, perhaps, is science, walking among the stars in its own way, and yet never, in fact, transcending the universe of nature, the order of the world as it now stands, by a single act of faith.

But it is in the sphere of religion and conscience, especially, that the necessary relation of man's life to an order of things which is above and beyond nature, so far as his own consciousness is concerned, comes most of all into view. Religion has no meaning except as it carries with it a reference always to some order of this sort, and without such reference there could be no place for it in the human spirit. Whether the religion be true or false is of no account as regards this point. What we are concerned with is simply the general idea of religion, the possibility of it in any form. This, of course, is something which lies back of all positive systems, to which the name may be applied. No outward teaching or tradition, no divine revelation, even, could cause religion to exist in any form among men if there were not in them previously a religious nature, a capacity for religion, needing to be called into exercise in this way. Now it is of this general capacity we say, lying, as it does, at the ground of all religions and making them possible, that it carries in it a necessary reference always to an economy which is beyond and above nature, and thus becomes an unanswerable argument, throughout the world, for the truth and importance of the thought we have in hand, namely, that the true end of man's life, his proper destiny, is to be sought in the world to come and not in that which is now present. For the sense of religion, in some form, is as universal as our human nature itself, and forms an inseparable part of its constitution; and it includes in itself everywhere, also, the assurance of its own legitimate authority, and its right to be regarded as a supreme power in the organization of our life. The want it expresses is felt to be the deepest, the end it seeks the most absolute, in the mysterious economy of our being. It is not hypothetically or problematically only, but with full categorical imperative, that the chief end of man is referred here to another world, and that he is required to subordinate to this all other ends as of merely secondary account. Such is the natural testimony of the soul, with regard to its own destination. No force of error or corruption can ever reduce it to silence. It speaks in the individual conscience of every

man. It is heard in the religious faith and worship of nations, handed forward as a sacred tradition from one generation to another, deep answering unto deep, as it were, in the vast and mighty abyss of the human spirit, and the voice of ages, like the sound of many waters, uttering itself forever in one and the same awfully solemn tone.

Infidels sometimes make it an argument against the whole idea of a revelation, and so of a strictly supernatural destiny for man, that the organization of nature is complete within itself, and that it offers no room directly for the apprehension or acknowledgment of any higher system. The supernatural as related to the natural must, of necessity, be miraculous; and the miraculous, according to the celebrated sophism of Hume, must ever meet an overwhelming contradiction from the universal experience of our present life, which is conditioned throughout by the constitution of the world as it now stands. In these circumstances, all positive systems of religion, falling back, as they do necessarily, on some supposed revelation, are to be regarded as visionary and false; and still further proof of which may be found in their contradictory character, as well as in the palpable absurdity and immorality by which most of them belie at once their own high claims. These manifold superstitions in the name of religion, monstrous abortions as they are of the human spirit, all pretending to rest on supernatural facts, show only how liable men are to deceive themselves in this direction, and how little weight is to be attached to any such pretension in any quarter. Thus runs, in brief, the sceptical argument. But its show of wisdom is entitled to small respect. It comes, at most, simply to this, that the order of nature is not itself the order of the supernatural, that the second absolutely transcends the first, and that there is no room, therefore, to conceive of the first as itself producing or demonstrating the second. Most certainly nature includes no provision in its own constitution, as nature merely, for the production or verification of that which is positively above nature. Such want of capacity, however, to go beyond or transcend itself, to be at one and the same time what it is and what it is not, is something very different from the supposition of its being actually at war with all that may be supposed to exist beyond its own sphere. Between the natural and the supernatural in this view, as we have now seen, no such antagonism in fact has place, but just the reverse. The world as it now stands, the cosmos whether of Humboldt or of Kant,

has no power, it is true, to affirm supernatural realities in their own proper form; they lie *over* its horizon; but it goes far to show negatively and indirectly their necessity, and to turn the eye of expectation and desire towards the region in which they are found. Time points always towards eternity. Nature cries aloud for that which is higher, greater, and more enduring than itself. The world that now is, with man in the centre of it, is a riddle whose burden can find no relief except in the thought of a world to come. The whole moral and religious side of man's life especially proclaims, with uncontrollable witness, his supernatural destiny, and leads him to acknowledge his relation to the invisible and eternal through all ages and times. It is not true, that the ideas of miracle and revelation do violence to his nature; on the contrary, he feels them to be in full harmony with its inmost wants, and, as it would appear, is unable to live without them indeed in any part of the world. False religions, in this way, are no argument against the truth of religion itself. They only show how deeply seated the idea of religion is in the very constitution of humanity; how irresistibly this looks and tends towards what is beyond the world of nature for its proper completion; and how natural and reasonable it is, therefore, to believe, that provision should be made for the satisfaction of so deep a want in some real way. This universal demand among men for religion in some form, both proves the reality of the supernatural relations on which the whole idea rests, and creates a presumption at the same time, not against, but powerfully in favor of any system which may present itself with the proper credentials of a true revelation.

Such a revelation, it is plain, the whole case requires. The voice of nature, and the testimony of the soul, refer man for the end of his being to another world; but they have no power to set before him the actual realities of this world in their own proper form; their utterances, as we have already seen, are negative rather than positive in their character; and, for this reason, even the truth which they proclaim may be said to be wanting in full security and force. To the solemn question: "Where shall wisdom be found; and where is the place of understanding?" the answer they return is: "Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it to be found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be

valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire." In other words, the true destiny of man, the proper end of his life, is something which, according to the testimony of the world itself, is not to be found in all that it contains, nor to be represented for a moment by its richest forms of wealth. It belongs to another order of existence altogether. "Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears." Natural religion points darkly to God, as comprehending in Himself in some way what the case is felt to require, and brings all to the momentous conclusion: "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding." But to give full effect to this conclusion, the voice of revelation must be added to the voice of nature. The supernatural must make itself known, not as a notion or thought merely, but as an actual reality, comprehending in it the very end itself for which man is thus required to live. This has been done, as we know, by the Gospel; which is to be regarded as a single revelation, shining more and more "as a light in a dark place" through the times of the Old Testament, till it burst forth finally with full effulgence in Him who is the "sun of righteousness," who, by the mystery of his incarnation, became himself among men the full manifestation of the truth under a living personal form; who, by his death and resurrection, "brought life and immortality to light," and who now reigns "Head over all things to the Church," a Prince and Saviour at the right hand of God, to give repentance and remission of sins, redemption and eternal salvation, to all who draw near to God in his name. "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

To say now that this glorious Gospel of the Blessed God places the chief end of man, the only true and proper destination of his life, in an order of things which is above and beyond the present world, is simply to declare what no one in his senses pretends to dispute. The only difficulty is, that the sense and meaning of it in this view are so common, so universally at hand, so much a matter of course, that the thought, by its very familiarity, fails to gain with most persons any distinct attention. Not only is it assumed throughout, that the constitution of nature is destined to pass away, and that the soul of man is formed for eternity; but the ground is everywhere taken, also, that the world, as it now stands, is

under a curse, that the relation men hold to it naturally in their present state is the result of an original universal apostacy or fall, by which they have lost their proper relation to God and their right to eternal life, that it is in these circumstances under the power of Satan, and subject to a law of sin and death, and that there is no room, therefore, to conceive of any harmony or agreement between its interests and purposes, in such view, and the true last object of man's creation. All this comes before us abundantly in the general teaching of the Bible; but most of all, with overwhelming emphasis, in the actual life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In him we see the truth itself, confronted in living form with the fallen world in the midst of which he moved without sin; and in no other way, certainly, could the full sense of what this world is in its relation to our human life generally be so effectually brought home to our minds. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, by conquering death and him that had the power of death, and by revealing or bringing to pass in and through his own person the kingdom of heaven, in which room is made for the complete fulfilment of man's destiny in a higher order of life that shall never come to an end. In calling us to such glory and honor and immortality, the Gospel, in the very nature of the case, requires us to enter into his spirit, to walk in his steps, to propose to ourselves the same supernatural end, and to aim at reaching it by renouncing and forsaking the present world. "Seek ye first," it is said, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness."—"He that seeketh his life, shall lose it."—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."—"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."—"One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."—"Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth

on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."—"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."—"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." These are specimens merely of the way, in which Christ continually enforces the thought, that men are formed for an eternal destiny, and that this is to be reached only through himself as "the way, the truth, and the life," by giving up this world and living supremely for another. And so throughout the New Testament, the idea of Christianity is made to consist, especially, just in this, that we are saved from the vanity and misery of a simply natural life, and placed in real, felt communication with a life that is supernatural, of which Christ is the source and the Holy Ghost the medium, and which carries in it thus the sure guaranty of an everlasting victory over all the powers of sin and death and hell.

The true destiny of man, the grand object and purpose of his existence, being thus not in the present world at all, but in an order of things which is out of it, above it and beyond it, and so in relation to it strictly supernatural, it becomes at once, of itself, plain, that no one can live to purpose, who does not know and acknowledge this end in its own proper character, so as to make it, in reality, the governing power of his life. It is not enough that we have been created for such end; nor yet that we may see and feel the necessity of it, as something beyond this world. The case calls for purpose and will, in view of an object which is known to be real. This comes before us here in the form of a supernatural revelation, brought to its full accomplishment in Christ; and the power by which we are set in actual communication with it, is what we denominate faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Only where the soul comes to understand its true destination in this way, and is led to regard and follow it with active resolution as a supreme end, can there be room to speak of it as fulfilling, in any measure, the object of its existence. Human life universally must be regarded as a failure, no matter what it may seem to accomplish in any other view, if it be not ordered in harmony thus with its own proper purpose and design, as something which is to be reached in another world and not in the present.

This, then, is the summit of all education, the perfection of knowledge and wisdom, that a man should comprehend and practically pursue the true end of his being, by seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. It is so, not simply from the worth of the object, in itself considered, as weighed against all other interests, but still more immediately, also, because it serves to bring into the soul, at once, order, harmony, light, freedom, and strength, by setting it in right relation to the law of its own life. All things are beautiful and strong in their place, only as they obey the law of their nature, stand in their appointed sphere, and fulfill their original destination; and so man, as made at first in the image of God and formed for immortality, can never be true to himself in any stage of his existence, in any sphere or department of his life, except as he is brought to live supremely for this supernatural end and no other. This is for him emphatically the *truth*, the fundamental reality of things as they are and ought to be, in the apprehension of which as a living fact consists the idea of all *wisdom* rightly so called. For wisdom, as distinguished from mere knowledge or science, has to do with actual life, with truth in its practical relations to the will, as well as in its merely theoretic relations to the understanding; and it necessarily reaches its highest form, accordingly, where it comes to the perception and acknowledgment of what is in reality the chief end of our life. Hence it is said, that the fear of the Lord, which is only another name for religion, or the practical sense of our relations to God and another world, is the beginning of wisdom; for the simple reason, that here begins, in fact, for man, all apprehension of that which is for him the actual truth of his own nature, and so the true sense and meaning also of the universe to which he belongs. The living sense of this comprehension in an economy which is higher than nature, and the issues of which belong to eternity, carrying along with it the practical submission of the soul to its authority, is literally both the commencement and the perpetual foundation and ground of all right thinking, no less than all right acting, on the part of men, in any and every direction. This is to be in the truth, and so to possess it under its own highest and only complete form, instead of having only the notion or shadow of it in the understanding. Such right posture with regard to the actual order and end of our own being is of more account than any condition besides, for understanding whatever pertains to the welfare and dignity of our life,

whether in this world or in that which is to come. "If any man *will* to do my will," our Saviour says,—if it be his mind and purpose to be thus in the truth—"he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God." And of the same import is that most significant word: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." All depends on the inward bent and habit of the soul with regard to its own proper destination, whether it be itself in conformity thus with the law of truth, or under the power of a lie. In this last case, the condemnation is, we are told, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Their unbelief is simply the result of their wish and determination to make the present world their end and portion. To men of this sort Christ says: "*Because* I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.—He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye *therefore* hear them not, because ye are not of God." The minds of such, according to St. Paul, are blinded by the god of this world, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;" for which reason the reigning course of this world is said also, in another place, to be "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." St. John abounds in the same thought. Truth with him is always life. "We know that we are of God," he writes, "and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." To be on the outside of this supernatural system of grace, in which is comprehended the highest relations and interests, and so the highest realities, of the proper life of man, is to be by that very fact involved in all falsehood and error. The error is not a false proposition simply, for the understanding; nor yet a partial mistake only of purpose and practice at some particular point; it embraces the entire man, mind, soul, and body, we may say, and turns his whole existence into a falsehood. He becomes by means of it, and remains continually, a *living personal lie*. What room can there be in a case so dreadful as this, to speak rationally of knowledge, learning, wisdom, under any different form? How can any amount of

science and culture avail to redeem from vanity, a life which is thus false throughout to its constitution, and which is itself no better than a hollow dream, and for which in this state the whole world must prove to be at last but shadow and sham? With what depth of meaning the Bible applies to every one, who is under the power of such a false life, the emphatic title *Fool!* All other forms of folly are in truth small, compared with this.

Here indeed is wisdom, the crowning excellency of all education, and of all knowledge and art besides, that a man should be in the truth, and know that which is for him in reality the deepest meaning of the universe, by having it for the very form of his own life. How easy it is to see, that the smallest measure of understanding in this form is of infinitely more worth, than the largest stores of learning or skill in any different view. What shall it profit a man, we may say, though he should know the whole world besides, and have no true knowledge of himself? What truth can there be in any other science or art for him, to whom the "light of life" is wanting in his own soul? We have no right to undervalue education and learning in any direction; and I have no disposition to do so certainly on the present occasion; but we must not shrink still from seeing and owning here what is after all, but the simple truth, namely, that no conceivable amount of such culture can deserve to be placed for one moment in comparison with the inward habit of piety which consists in fearing God and keeping his commandments. Without this, the greatest philosopher is less wise in fact than the unlettered rustic to whom it may belong. The science of the saints is something far more high and glorious than any mere learning of the schools. It has to do with vastly superior objects, moves in loftier and wider regions of thought, and brings into the soul an immeasurably clearer illumination. "The entrance of thy words giveth light," says the Psalmist, "it giveth understanding unto the simple." The revelation of the *Logos*, the Divine Word, by the mystery of the incarnation, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," the most pure and perfect manifestation of truth in the world, was not to teach men the hidden secrets of nature, the laws of matter, the principles of government, or any other knowledge of this sort belonging merely to the present life, but to set them in right relation to God and their eternal destiny; something which for this very reason must be accounted of more consequence than any other kind of knowledge

which it is possible for them to possess. "In him was life"—not theory, merely, or outward doctrine—"and the life was the *light* of men," served to bring them into the truth itself under its highest form. "I am the light of the world," our Saviour says accordingly; "he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Such illumination is, of course, practical. There is no separation here between the understanding and the will. Knowledge is at the same time charity; without which, all gifts and accomplishments are pronounced by the apostle Paul to be of no worth whatever. With this comes also true freedom and strength. "If ye continue in my word," Christ says, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." To know, in this case, is to *be* at the same time in what is known; and it is easy enough to see, how such living union with the truth, such settlement and consolidation of the mind, on the true last ground of its own being, where it is set in harmony also with the will of God and the actual order of things, must prove at the same time, its happy emancipation, so far as this right order prevails, from all false authority and power; and how utterly impossible it is, I may add, that liberty should exist at all, or be anything more than an empty chimera, under any other imaginable character and form. And to be thus in the truth, is to be strong also in the only proper and full sense of the word. We often hear it said, that knowledge is power; and this is true to a certain extent, no doubt, of all merely secular knowledge, as related to the ends of the present life. It is more in this respect than money, which is power also in a very high degree. In our own day especially, science rules the earth, and is fast subduing it to the service of secular purposes and ends. But it is after all only where knowledge takes its highest form, in the character of that practical, heavenly wisdom, which consists in understanding and acknowledging the true end of life as something to be found only in God and the eternal world, that it comes to be, at the same time, what is truly comprehended in the idea of power for man. Short of this, all science and art are at best but triumphs of mind over matter, in the sphere of nature itself. What is really needed, however, is that the soul should be brought to surmount the life of nature altogether, to acquire the mastery of itself, and to overcome the world, in the prosecution of its own proper destiny beyond the grave. For every purpose of this sort, all such secular science and art are perfectly powerless. But here

precisely comes into view, the true nature and dignity of the power that is comprehended in a practical obedience to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Paul is beyond comparison greater than Alexander or Julius Cæsar. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." To walk in the Spirit, so as not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, is more a great deal than to tunnel mountains and bridge vallies, curb the lightning and imprison steam, for the transitory uses of trade. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," says St. John, "even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

No wonder, that this heavenly wisdom, carrying in it thus the highest perfection of man's life, should be so commended to our regard as it is in the Holy Scriptures, and that such glowing terms should be employed to set forth its praise. The price of it is indeed above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, neither may it be valued with pure gold. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her."

The whole subject reveals to us the nature, necessity, and value of *Faith*. The chief end of man, the last meaning of his life, is not comprehended in the present order of things, the passing diorama in the midst of which he is here carried forward continually to the grave. It lies in another world, in a system of things which is beyond and above nature, and so beyond the range and reach also of all merely natural understanding and knowledge. To be known and felt at all then, this supernatural economy must be exhibited to us in the form of a Divine revelation; which we are required to accept simply in this character, in order that we may make full proof of its power. Opinion, speculation, dreamy sentiment, in the case, are not enough. The world in question is not made up of negatives simply and abstractions, but of facts, realities, and actual-living relations, which need to be apprehended as they are, that we may be saved by the sense of them from the vanity of our present life; and this precisely is what is accomplished for

us by faith. Through the word of God, and especially through this word presented to us bodily in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it sets us in real communication with things unseen and eternal, and makes it possible for us to have such regard to them as we ought, in working out the fearfully solemn problem of life. It is not the product in any way of reason or logic. These so far as they are concerned with natural things, or with the order only of the present world, have no power to reach the supernatural; and so far as they may be capable of being exercised upon this also, *when* known, have no power ever to originate any such knowledge. Facts here, as always, must go before intelligence and thought; and knowledge consequently must follow faith. We see then the nature of this faculty. It is the power of being firmly assured, on the testimony of God who cannot lie, that there is such a world of grace and glory as is set before us by the Gospel, not to be seen by mortal eyes, but yet surrounding us at all points, and continually near at hand, in which, and in which only, is to be accomplished the true object and end of our existence. It is the power of acknowledging the supernatural, the miraculous, the real presence of possibilities, and powers, and actual operations, that go beyond all the resources of nature and surmount all its laws, in a new order of life which is made to be actually at hand in the mystery of the Church, through the death, and resurrection, and glorification of the Son of God. On the necessity and importance of this sublime capacity, this faculty of believing realities which transcend and confound sense, more need not be said. The case speaks for itself. If the true end of our life, and so its universal significance and worth, lie not in the present world but in another; and if all wisdom for us be comprehended in the practical perception and acknowledgment of our proper destination in such view; what terms shall sufficiently express the value of faith, the only power on our side by which it is possible for us to burst the confines of time and sense, so as to communicate with what is beyond in a real and not simply imaginary and notional way. In the nature of the case, it is the gift of God; and well does it deserve the title *precious*, applied to it by St. Peter; for it lies at the foundation of all that wisdom, whose price we have already seen to be above comparison, and is the source, in a certain sense, of every grace and perfection for the human soul. Without faith, it is impossible to please God, and in vain also to think of using life to good purpose in any other way. In such

condition, man appears necessarily incomplete always, his nature shorn of its proper glory, his mind looking forth upon us at best in dismal and dim eclipse. Let this thought sink deeply into your hearts. It is something greater really and truly to believe the articles of the Apostles' Creed, every one of which is a mystery transcending the whole order of nature, than to know all that is taught in the best colleges and universities of the land. No literary diploma can ever match in honor that word to Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven!" Of the same glorious distinction our Saviour speaks, when he says: "I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!" Well might that great student of Nature, the late Sir Humphry Davy, tired out with her same everlasting response to all the questionings of science, *It is not in me! It is not with me!* make the memorable declaration towards the close of his life, that he envied no man any other possession whatever, such as wealth, learning, or worldly distinction, but would cheerfully give all for the one simple privilege of being able to believe firmly and steadily the realities of another world. That indeed is something better than all knowledge, and power, and riches, and glory besides.

You need this habitual, practical sense of the supernatural, that you may not walk in darkness and miss the true end of life, regarded as a purely private and personal interest. But you need it no less, in order that you may be able rightly to understand the living world around you, and so be prepared to act a right part in it in your generation. No man is at liberty to live simply and only for himself. Least of all, we may say, is he at liberty to do so, on whom God, in his providence, has been pleased to bestow special gifts and powers, especially in the way of education. You have not been educated for yourselves alone, nor mainly, but for the use and service of others. The very idea of a liberal education forbids the thought of its being devoted merely to selfish purposes and ends, under the low base form particularly which these carry with them for the most part in the present world. It is degraded, profaned, and made grossly vulgar and illiberal, by every association of this sort. But to live for the world really and to purpose, we must have clearly before our minds its true constitution, the actual meaning of it, the fundamental law of its being, its absolute

destination and end ; just what we need, in one word, in the case of our separate personal life, that it may be ordered wisely and with effect. Self-knowledge here, and the knowledge of the world, condition each other, and go hand in hand together. If we look at the human world simply as a natural organization, a system of existence whose meaning and end hold mainly in the present life, our interest in it, our care for it, our devotion to its service, will assume necessarily a corresponding form. We shall lose our thoughts and calculations altogether in the sense of its temporal relations, and can hardly fail to make all at last of simply material interests. But if this hypothesis be in itself completely false, as we know that it must be in fact if Christianity be more than a dream ; if it be certain that the chief end and last destination of the human race, collectively taken, as well of the single man, is *not* in the order of nature at all, but in a strictly supernatural economy which holds above and beyond this ; then must all such thinking and acting as are conditioned by that other false and wrong supposition be themselves false also, not according to the actual truth of things, and so of comparatively no worth in the end. We must have firm faith in the invisible and eternal world, in the grand and glorious mysteries of the Christian creed, in order that we may have any firm position, or any sure and safe judgment, or any power of right speech and action, in our relations to the present world.

And especially may this be regarded as necessary, Young Gentlemen, for the particular period and time, in which you are called to live.

We hear much said, in glorification of the present age. It is fashionable in certain quarters, to speak of it as the perfection of all ages, and to magnify the spirit of it as better and greater than the spirit of any other period that has ever yet been known in the world. It is glorified as an age of knowledge, of freedom, of rapidly advancing civilization. It is an age of vast action and talk ; an age of astonishing discoveries and inventions ; an age in which the arts of peace are everywhere successfully cultivated, giving rise to visions of outward prosperity that never entered formerly into the human mind. It is an age of progress and reform, big with the idea of its own mission to rehabilitate man in the possession of his natural rights, and to bring to an end all sorts of political oppression and abuse. In no part of the world, moreover, may it be said to be more at home, than just here in America. The genius of

the age is emphatically the genius of this rising republic. Here it reigns on all sides with a power that seems to carry all before it, and which it is considered for the most part, a privilege to honor and obey. Happy, as the song runs, is the young man, who enters upon life, on American soil, in the middle of the nineteenth century! He has only to yield himself to the genius of the country, and the spirit of the age, that he may live to purpose and do well. Let him only spread out his canvass boldly and broadly to these favoring gales; they will waft his bark happily over the sea of life, and bring it finally to its right end.

Never was there, however, under such plausible form, a more perfect delusion. The age is *not* thus infallible and safe. On the contrary, it is made up, to a terrible extent, beyond most ages that have been, of falsehood and error, sophistry and sham. This becomes evident, just as soon as we bring the strong light of eternity to bear upon it, by making earnest with the thought, that man is formed for a supernatural destiny, and for the accomplishment of this requires a real redemption, that shall deliver him from the power of this present evil world, and engage him to follow after life and immortality in another. The spirit of the age is always at war in reality with the actual truth of things, as we find this exhibited in the Gospel and in the Church; there is a necessary contradiction between this world (*ὁ αἰὼν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου*—the present *seculum*,) and the kingdom of God; the course of the world is in and of itself “according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”—in all those, namely, who do not submit themselves with the *obedience of Faith* to the mystery of salvation in Christ. But it is peculiar in some measure to our time, that the world in its own order affects to be itself now the very form in which the true ends and purposes of Christianity are to be reached. The spirit of the age, directly or indirectly, seeks to pass itself off as an angel of light, “flying in the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” In its general character, however, it remains just what the same power has always been over against the true kingdom of Christ. It has no faith in the supernatural; except as this may be brought to resolve itself into some sort of gnostic abstraction or dream; in which form it professes to hold it in high account, taking credit to itself in so doing for its own

spirituality. But its spirituality, alas, ends always in mere spiritualism, the working of the simply natural mind pretending to soar above its own sphere of the flesh, but never getting out of it in fact. For the *Spirit*, in the sense of the Gospel, the supernatural under a real form, the mystery of the creed and of the Church, this eminently spiritualistic spirit of the age has no sense or organ whatever. It eschews all that, and holds it in abomination. This notion of the real presence of supernatural powers in the Christian Church for supernatural ends, involving as it does, necessarily, the subordination of the whole order of nature to a higher economy that can be apprehended only by faith, is precisely that which it has no power to endure; and the presence of which, wherever it may come seriously into view, proves always to be for it like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, causing it to start up instantly in its true antichristian shape. However bland, liberal, and sweet, it can show itself towards the Christian profession, so long as this may be content to walk arm in arm with it in the fellowship of merely secular interests and aims, such as useful knowledge, general education, good government, humanitarian philanthropy, and all sorts of moral reform, the whole case is at once changed the moment it is presumed in any quarter to make earnest with realities, which are supposed to reach into another world. Then your bland liberal is at once converted into an intolerant fanatic. If it were Mohammedanism, Mormonism, anything else under the sun, he could bear it and have some patience with it; but to be confronted in such style with what claims to be the actual presence of the supernatural as a real force in the world, having to do with the last and highest destination of men in another life, is more than he finds it possible for a wise man to endure—especially in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is to revive the superstition of the Middle Ages; to turn religion into mechanism and mummery; to open the door for priestcraft and spiritual despotism; to own a power on earth above civil government and the sovereignty of the State, which in this case, moreover, is generally taken to resolve itself finally into the sovereignty of the people. It is at once treason thus to the sacred cause of freedom, popular rights, political economy, and modern civilization generally; and so far as it prevails must serve to keep back the millennium of the world's regeneration under this temporal and natural order, God only can tell how long. Does not the spirit of the age do well to be angry with pretensions, which thus

stultify its highest wisdom and turn the whole pride of its life into open shame? If there be any truth in these pretensions, it stands convicted of being a wholesale universal lie; and to save itself from this, being secretly conscious in fact of its own falsehood, it has no alternative but to retort the charge on the source from which it proceeds, and then to rage and storm, calumniate and misrepresent, as it best can, for the purpose of giving it effect.

Tried in this way, the spirit of the present period is easily enough found to be predominantly set on natural interests and ends, as the chief purpose of man's life, to the exclusion of such as are supernatural. It is rationalistic, humanitarian, politico-economical. Religion itself is required by it to officiate in the service of the flesh, and eternity is made to stoop obsequiously to the behests of time. For the realities of faith are substituted the spectral phantoms of opinion—or the dismal *irony*, shall we call it, of demoniacal delusions. Materialism bears rampant rule on all sides. The true victory over the world for man, is held to be more and more, not by any such supernatural process of the Spirit as was dreamed of by saints and martyrs of the olden time, but by mastering the elements of nature, multiplying machinery, promoting the facilities of commerce and trade, and making the earth to serve, as widely as possible, the comfort and well-being simply of the present life. Man is held practically, if not in set theory, to be sufficient for his own ends, without the intervention of any higher help than that which is offered to him in his natural constitution. What he is supposed to need, is education, general knowledge, proper room for the exercise of his rights, the benefit especially of republican institutions, and the practice of the natural virtues in the name of religion. Secular ends, temporal interests, the judgments of the merely natural mind in the form of reigning fashion and opinion, are made the standard of truth, and applied as a measure even to the contents of revelation itself. In all directions the most solemn points of faith and duty are settled by principles and maxims, which overthrow the idea altogether of any positive authority in the world that is higher than the world itself. Religion ceases thus to be the daughter of the skies, and loses her holy mission in what must be considered at best, enthusiasm for a simply earthly ideal.

Striking and most truly instructive exemplification of this was presented not long since, when the spirit of the age seemed

to find for a moment among us a fit *avatâr* in the form of LOUIS KOSSUTH, who appeared on our shores as a martyr of the Hungarian rebellion, and a representative of the general cause of revolutionary liberty throughout Europe. It is still but as it were the other day, since the ears of the whole nation were stunned with the noise of his presence, as he passed from one part of the country to another, in a sort of grand triumphal procession, the cynosure, seemingly, of all eyes and the idol of all hearts. Seldom indeed has the delirium of man-worship been carried to a more ridiculous and fulsome extent. His words were received as oracles of wisdom; his oriental bombast was taken for the inspiration of a prophet. To speak against him, or even to be ominously silent in his praise, was held to be little less than blasphemy towards God and treason to the dearest rights and interests of man. For was *he* not the incarnation of the holy cause of freedom, a full living personification of the glorious conception of man's destiny, which forms the very life and soul of the modern revolutionary spirit throughout the world? And did he not invoke besides the authority of the Bible, the genius of Christianity itself, as in full unison with his own mission and cause? Was he not a preacher of righteousness to the nations, and a new Messiah sent forth for their redemption and salvation? Why then should he not be worshipped and glorified, like Diana of the Ephesians, or the colossal image set up by Nebuchadnezzar on the plain of Dura! So for a time, as we all know, the furor ran. It was a perfect *stampede*, not of dumb cattle, but of rational and civilized men; which, however, like all stampedes, was doomed soon to come to an end. The practical tact, and sound common sense, of the nation, acted upon by a quick apprehension also, no doubt, of its own material interests, came in due time to its relief, and gave it power to see, finally, that it had been playing the fool. Then its idol was suffered to fall silently into contempt; and before the end of a single year took its departure, under the metamorphosis of "Mr. Alexander Smith," without so much of a *Good bye sirs!* as even to pay its landlady's bill. But after all, the main significance of humbug, regarded as a mirror of the reigning mind of the age, cannot be said to be overthrown by this explosion; for the explosion was not the result properly of any insight into the essential falsehood of the idea which Kossuth represented, but came to pass rather through considerations of expediency and interest which were connected with it only in an accidental way. It was

Yankee cunning, more than Christian principle, that turned the scale at last in favor of conservatism and common sense. His doctrine of "intervention" was found to be practically impolitic and unsafe; and so it was voted out of good company, and may be considered, for the present, as having gone its way. But the principle of it, the pretended Divine right of rebellion and revolution, the demoniacal idea that the people may upset all governments at their pleasure which do not happen to square with their own notions of liberty, has not been denounced as a general thing even by those who have taken most credit to themselves for opposing the use which it has been attempted to make of it in this way; and what is worst of all, the true relation of the whole affair to Christianity, would seem to remain still as much as ever out of view.

This is indeed deplorable. The political nonsense of the demonstration was as nothing, in comparison with the wrong it did to the religion of Jesus Christ; and until this be generally seen and felt, we have full right to refer to it as a picture, which is still of force to illustrate the subject now in hand—the wrong position, namely, and false spirit of the age, as tried by the supernatural standard of the Gospel.

It will be borne in mind, that a very active disposition was shown, on the part of the Protestant religious press generally and of the so called *evangelical* ministry in our leading cities, to identify the cause and spirit of the Hungarian chief with the very soul of Christianity itself. His notion of liberty was taken to be of one and the same order precisely with the freedom that is preached in the New Testament. His "brotherhood of nations" and "solidarity of humanity," were allowed to represent in good earnest the last aim of Christianity in the present world, as well as to overshadow completely its higher regards to another. Nothing could be clearer than the fact, that with him all faith in the invisible and eternal was the merest naturalism, and nothing more; that he saw in the Bible at best but a code of high moral maxims, capable of being turned to good account by the natural reason of men for social and particular ends; that socialistic or humanitarian philanthropism made up his whole conception of Christian charity; and that he was of one mind substantially, in his view of man's destiny, and of the problem of the world, with Ledru Rollin, Mazzini, and the leaders generally of the Red Republican movement in Europe.* In no one of his speeches, was there

* It would seem to need only the most ordinary spiritual discernment, to

expressed a particle of reverence for the Word made Flesh or for the mystery of the Holy Catholic Church. And yet in spite of all this, nay it might seem on the very strength of it, he was urged and encouraged from all sides to claim for his cause the special sympathy of heaven, and to consider himself a sort of living commentary on the inmost sense of the Gospel, as well as a martyr and confessor for its truth before the eyes of the whole civilized world. A little clap-trap in glorification of the Bible and Private Judgment, some show of respect for the Sabbath, (too thin to wear any time,) the compliment of attending church occasionally, (where he was not unlikely to have his ears tickled with something preached or *prayed* in his own praise) all joined with everlasting changes rung on the hackneyed and unmeaning themes of liberty, human rights, universal brotherhood, and the power of the world, if it were only let alone to govern and save itself, was enough, it seemed, and more than enough, to steal away the senses of his undiscerning religious admirers, and to gull them into the belief that he was a sort of hero and saint combined, who had been raised up specially by God to usher in a new era for Protestantism and *Evangelical* Christianity on both sides of the Atlantic. His interpretations of Scripture, generally flat enough, were listened to as though they were felt to drop from the skies. He was able, it appeared, to teach our divines theology, as well

see and feel the truth of this general charge in all his speeches. They are animated throughout by a spirit of Paganism, without the slightest tinge of Christianity. His memorable prayer, at the grave of the Magyar heroes who fell in the battle of Rapoynna, may stand as a fit monument of his mind in this respect. It runs thus:—"Almighty Lord! God of the warriors of Arpad! look down from thy starry throne upon thy imploring servant, from whose lips the prayer of millions ascends to thy heaven, praising the unsearchable power of thine Omnipotence. O God, over me shines thy sun, and beneath me repose the relics of my fallen heroic brethren; above my head the sky is blue, and under my feet the earth is dyed red with the holy blood of the children of our ancestors. Let the animating beams of thy sun fall here, that flowers may spring up from the blood, so that these hells of departed beings may not moulder unadorned. God of our fathers, and God of the nations! hear and bless the voice of our warriors, and let the arm and the soul of brave nations thunder to break the iron hand of tyranny, as it forges its chains. As a freeman I kneel on these fresh graves; by the remains of my brothers. By such a sacrifice as theirs, thy earth would be consecrated, were it all stained with sin. O God! on this holy soil, above these graves, no race of slaves can live. O Father! Father of our fathers! mighty over myriads! Almighty God of the heaven, the earth, and the seas! from these bones springs a glory whose radiance is on the brow of my people. Hallow their dust with thy grace, that the ashes of my fallen heroic brethren may rest in peace! Leave us not, great God of battles! In the holy name of the nations, praised be Thy Omnipotence! Amen."

as our senators wisdom. Sayings and sentences from his lips on the subject of religion, now happily forgotten, were caught up as apothegms or gnomes pregnant with celestial wisdom, and sent whizzing and blazing like so many fire-balls through the length of the land. It was not enough for the religious papers to praise, laud, and bless his name, from week to week. Pulpits, in many cases, became profane and churches were desecrated, for the same end. Clerical delegations, in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington City, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, press into his presence for the very purpose of flattering his vanity, assuring him of their hearty sympathy, and bidding him God-speed in his revolutionary counsels and designs; and he is allowed, on the other hand, openly to accept these congratulatory addresses, as a formal sanction given in the name of religion, by its supposed authorized exponents, to his whole character and mission and doctrine, (*intervention* hobby and all,) as being in full accordance with the genius of Christianity, and in all respects true to the mind of its glorious and adorable Founder. Doctors of Divinity, and grave Professors of Theology figured, among others, in these demonstrations, and helped as they could, to give them solemnity and eclat. If Kossuth was not convinced of his own title to be regarded as an apostle of the last and deepest sense of Christianity for the men of the Nineteenth Century, it was not the fault, certainly, of those who thus threw themselves as the representatives of American piety in his way. They did all that could be well asked, to help him to this conclusion.

Now the misery of all this is, not just that so vast a blunder should have been committed in the name of religion, but that our religion should have been capable at all of being deceived, to so great an extent, in such gross way—and still more, that there should seem to be, even to this hour, so little sense of the true nature of the mistake. It is with the *ideal* which Kossuth was made for the moment to enshrine, far more than with the passing form of the shrine itself, that we are here concerned; and looking at this, we find occasion enough in the case for the most painful and gloomy reflection. What must we think of a Christianity, arrogating to itself the highest character of evangelical purity and truth, which could so easily and readily find what it took for its own image in the principles and pretensions of such a man! It was bad enough that he should be compared with Washington. But to make him a representative of the doctrine and spirit of Jesus Christ, to ac-

cept his rhodomontade about liberty, and philanthropy, and human rights, for the faith and charity which were preached by St. Paul, the lofty morals of St. Peter, or the divine breathings of St. John; to see in the *Gospel according to Kossuth* the likeness, to hear in it the echo of that glorious creed for which the martyrs and confessors suffered in ancient times: how shall we rightly characterize an infatuation so monstrous as this, or how shall we explain it so as to save the honor and credit of the cause that could be carried away by it to so lamentable an extent! Alas, the religious spirit of the age, as it reigns generally in our evangelical sects, could not have been thus egregiously imposed upon by so transparent a falsehood, (the demon of radicalism in such gossamer guise,) if it were not itself deeply and sadly infected with the power of the same lie. This is the portentous meaning of the transaction, which it well becomes every thoughtful mind to lay seriously to heart; and it is for the lesson it carries in it under such view, that I have considered it proper to hold it up for contemplation on the present occasion. May you be able to understand it well, and to bear it hereafter properly in recollection.

If you would understand your duty to the world, and be able to live for it to any purpose in your generation, it is necessary, first of all, that you should cultivate a firm and steady faith in the reality of its supernatural relations, and have regard continually to the destiny of man as formed for a higher state of existence. The great error of the age consists just in this, that it is not willing to acknowledge these relations except in a simply nominal way, and is led thus to ascribe to merely natural interests and secular ends, as connected with human life, an importance which does not belong to them in fact. This is done to a great extent in the name of religion itself; which is then always confounded more or less with zeal for such subordinate purposes and aims, while its own proper ends are in the same degree thrown into the shade. But no estimation of interests which belong only to this world, can ever be according to truth, or deserve to be relied upon practically, which is not conditioned by an active regard at the same time to the eternal destiny of men as that which is for them of supreme account. Nay, such lower interests, we may say, thus dissociated in thought from man's chief end, become in fact themselves false, take the form not unfrequently of demoniacal delusions, and are entitled to no enthusiasm whatever. Nothing can be more hollow and fallacious, for this reason, than

much of the declamation we hear about education, useful knowledge, liberty, free institutions, and the right of self-government, as though such privileges in the order of nature were to be regarded as in and of themselves the first thing needful for humanity, or might be allowed to rule and control the idea of its destiny in every higher view. Learn to hold all such declamation at its true value. Learn to distinguish well here, between the wisdom which comes from above, and that which is only from beneath. Have courage to see and own the truth. Socialism is not Christianity. It is not the design of the Gospel to subvert thrones and create republics. Secular ends are of just and right force, only as they are held in practical subordination to such as are supernatural and eternal; and they fall over necessarily to the dominion of Satan, the god of this world and the father of lies, wherever this proportion ceases to be observed. The smallest measure of faith is of more value, than any amount of useful knowledge. Education is no blessing, but only a curse to society, if it be not based upon religion, and animated throughout by the sense of its supreme authority in some positive form. Godless schools and colleges, Godless arts and sciences, as well as Godless political and social institutions generally, carrying in them a relation simply to the present world and its wants, and virtually ignoring the claims of another, deserve the abhorrence, and should excite the apprehension and fear of all good men. Not to see and feel all this, is itself a species of infidelity, which opens the way for the very worst disorders and mistakes. It is to set the natural practically above the supernatural; which is to deny in fact the reality of the last altogether. It is to make humanity in and of itself, as it now stands, sufficient for its own ends; which is such a lie as overthrows the whole Gospel, and necessarily turns into caricature all truth besides, by forcing it into false relations and proportions. Hence the universal affinity in which this style of thinking is found to stand with all sorts of rationalistic speculation, sectarian fanaticism, radicalism, socialism, and wild revolutionary republicanism of the most openly anti-christian stamp. Here we have in truth the veritable *Antichrist* of the present age. Learn to know him, and to be aware of his devices. If you are to live wisely for your generation, it will depend much, very much, on this one counsel well kept in mind.

Finally, to return again in conclusion, to what is more directly personal in the application of our theme, let me exhort

you all to be true to your own proper destination, by seeking first, each one of you, for himself, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. As it was said once by a distinguished artist, to account for the pains he took with his work, *I paint for eternity*; so let it be your care also, to live seriously and earnestly, not for the world, which is now rapidly passing away, but for that which is to come. Look not at things which are seen and temporal, but at things which are not seen and eternal. Lay yourselves out to know God, to serve Him in the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, and to enter at last into the rewards of his heavenly kingdom. Do not count yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Let no man take from you your crown—the crown of glory and immortality to which you are called by the Gospel, and which has been purchased for you by the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Here is an object worthy of your highest ambition and most active zeal, in comparison with which the most dazzling visions of glory in this world are of as little worth as so much dust or chaff. Let it not be to you as a tale only that is told, or as an empty dream. Seek to have firm faith in the grand and glorious mysteries of the Christian Creed, as realities which are to you of infinitely greater account than all events and facts besides. Be not satisfied, in a case of such unutterable consequence, with faint impressions and feeble purposes and aims. Meditate on your own supernatural destiny. Think much of the vanity of the world, the shortness of life, the certainty of death, and the solemn retributions of the world to come. It has been well said, that the thought of eternity, brought home to the soul from day to day, is for every man the thought of all thoughts, which, if it do not make him wise, must show him to be mad. It is a whole volume of wisdom compressed into a single word. Read it much, I charge you, and study it well. Read it especially in the light of the simple, but unspeakably sublime annunciation: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Read it through the living commentary of that illustrious cloud of witnesses, apostles, prophets, martyrs, confessors, saints of all ages and climes, whose faith has already received its reward and who now from their heavenly seats look down upon you with unceasing interest, and kindly beckon you to follow them in the path by which they have been themselves conducted to eternal glory. Read it above all at the foot of the Cross, where in the person of

Him who is the Truth and the Life, nailed upon it, crowned with thorns, covered with his own blood, and overwhelmed with reproach and contempt, the true sense of this world and the true sense of the next, the nothingness of the one and the infinite importance of the other, are brought into view as they could be by no representative besides. "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners" and "arm yourselves likewise with the same mind," that you may run the race of life with faith and patience to its proper goal, and receive at last the victor's palm and crown. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap : for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."







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